



# CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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## CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

### PRESS RELEASE

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### **California Community Colleges Board of Governors honors four with 2015 Classified Employee of the Year Award**

*SACRAMENTO, Calif.* – The California Community Colleges Board of Governors named Rochelle Franco, Donni Jean Prince, Kelly Ramos and Vance Manakas as the 2015 California Community Colleges Classified Employees of the Year and honored them today at the board meeting in Sacramento.

“Educating 2.1 million students across this state takes talented staff at all levels of operation,” said California Community Colleges Board President Geoffrey L. Baum. “These classified employees honored today have shown supreme dedication and a keen understanding of the needs of our students, and we are lucky to have them as part of our workforce.”

The award has been given annually since 2009 to community college classified employees who demonstrate the highest level of commitment to professionalism and the community colleges. Recipients are nominated by members of their college or district community and endorsed by their local board of trustees. Award recipients are selected by representatives of the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, and the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Recipients must have a record of outstanding performance on the job, as well as a record of active participation on campus and in their respective communities.

The Classified Employee of the Year Award is supported through a grant from the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Each recipient will receive a \$500 cash award and a commemorative plaque.

#### **The 2015 Award Winners:**

##### **Rochelle Franco, Los Rios Community College District**

Rochelle Franco is an admissions and records evaluator/degree auditor at Folsom Lake College and has been with the district for 17 years. Franco attended Folsom Lake College’s El Dorado Center earning an associate degree in general education transfer, and then transferred to Chapman University to complete a bachelor’s degree in organizational leadership. Throughout her educational journey and into her professional career, she has remained committed to Folsom Lake College and its students. She served as a math tutor while attending El Dorado Center. Following graduation, she worked for five years as a temporary classified employee in multiple capacities, including financial aid, assessment, and admissions and records. Due to her exemplary job performance and breadth of knowledge, she ultimately reached the position she holds today. She has served on the college’s curriculum committee for the past 12 years and continually advocates for students and

provides advice and counsel on ways to facilitate student completion. Franco's background as a community college student and graduate, deep understanding of her role, knowledge of college protocols and processes, combined with an insightful awareness of the factors across the college that can serve as barriers to goal attainment make her an invaluable advocate for student success.

#### **Donni Jean Prince, Desert Community College District**

Donni Jean Prince is a veterans resource specialist and has served the district for 36 years. In her decades-long career, Prince has helped veteran students from a variety of backgrounds achieve their educational goals. In a given day, Prince will handle the varied educational needs of veterans from the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Prince has a keen sense of the needs and struggles of student veterans and directs them to college programs and services that will serve them best. She offers them continued support from their first day of college to graduation. Prince's work has been nothing short of vital in providing student veterans with the tools, knowledge and support required to graduate and improve their financial and social well-beings.

#### **Kelly Ramos, Contra Costa Community College District**

Kelly Ramos is a minority retention specialist and has been with the district for six years. Ramos exemplifies the mission of the California Community Colleges through her passion for empowering students to transform their lives and reach their academic goals. In every position she has held, she has demonstrated a strong work-ethic focused on providing students the resources and support structures they need to achieve their dreams. She advocates for more efficient and productive programs, processes and procedures to help students navigate their educational journey with ease so they can focus on their studies. She loves to collaborate across campus departments and with the campus community to provide solutions that result in the largest positive impact for students. Ramos embodies the practice of collaboration and inclusion on her campus. She brings the classified perspective to campus shared governance committees and works with other constituency groups in order to promote change and enhance the educational experience of students. This is exemplified in her collaborative work with faculty to develop The Hub, which was commended in the college's accreditation report.

#### **Vance Manakas, Ventura County Community College District**

Vance Manakas is an athletic trainer and has served the district for 33 years. He is always the first to volunteer to assist on special projects in his department, such as Hall of Fame induction ceremonies and fundraisers. Manakas is fully committed to the health of his athletes and to the care, prevention and rehabilitation of athletic injuries. He always ensures that there is an athletic trainer scheduled for every home athletic contest. He is professional and enthusiastic in his support of men's and women's athletics. He supervises and councils student athletic trainers in the correct techniques and responsibilities of athletic training and administration. He regularly monitors and evaluates the athletic training programs at California State University, Northridge and California Lutheran University to ensure that Moorpark College provides the same quality educational opportunities to its students. Manakas develops rehabilitation programs for both students and staff under the auspices of a team physician; he also develops emergency protocols for the Athletic Training Department. Manakas regularly communicates with physicians, coaches and college administration regarding the total health care needs of student athletes. He is a founding member of the bylaws committee of the California Community College Athletic Trainers Association. He will be a presenter at the Health Services Association of

California Community Colleges 2015 Annual Conference on “First Aid for Orthopedic Emergencies.” In 2012, he was inducted into the California Community College Athletic Trainers Association Hall of Fame.

*The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.*

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